

HELEN MIRREN



Helen Mirren is considered one of England's finest Shakespearean performers. In *Caligula*, she portrays Caesonia, the sensual Roman divorcee who seduces the mad Roman emperor. She has described the film as "an irresistible mixture of art and genitals."

As a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Dame Mirren has played roles ranging from the crazed Ophelia to the evil Lady Macbeth to the playful Rosalind. Her film debut was in 1969 with James Mason in Michael Powell's *Age of Consent*, followed by roles in Ken Russell's *Savage Messiah* (1973) and Lindsay Anderson's *O Lucky Man!* with future co-star Malcolm McDowell. In fact, it was McDowell who suggested to the producers that Mirren play the role of his wife.

Mirren was born in London and spent three years at a teacher's college before deciding to become an actress. "I worked with the National Youth Theatre," she says. "I felt quite comfortable on the stage and decided to make acting rather than teaching my career."

Her first professional theater appearances were in *Charley's Aunt*, *A Long Day's Journey into Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*. PBS watchers first saw Mirren in the Masterpiece Theatre serialization of *Cousin Bette* as well as Harold Pinter's *The Collection* (also with McDowell), but most television viewers now know her for the highly praised, award-winning crime series *Prime Suspect* and her Emmy-winning portrayal of *Elizabeth I* (2005) for HBO.

Following *Caligula*, Mirren has appeared in numerous acclaimed films including *The Long Good Friday* (1980), John Boorman's *Excalibur* (1981), *2010* (1984), Taylor Hackford's *White Nights* (1985), Peter Weir's *The Mosquito Coast* (1985), Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* (1989), Paul Schrader's *The Comfort of Strangers* (1990), *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1991), *The Madness of King George* (1994), Robert Altman's *Gosford Park* (2001), *Calendar Girls* (2003) and Stephen Frear's *The Queen* (2006).